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STATEMENT OF
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(OPNAV N13)
BEFORE THE
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL AWARENESS TRANSFORMATION
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Introduction

Chairman Snyder, Congressman Akin, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present an overview of Navy's Language, Regional Expertise and Culture transformation efforts and for your interest in, and support for, these vital programs.

Navy leadership views language, regional expertise and culture, or LREC, as a force multiplier in the global, international maritime environment of the 21st Century. Catalyzed by the attack on USS Cole in October 2000, Navy has made a concerted effort to increase and enhance LREC capacity across the Total Force. We have taken stock of organic capabilities, compared them to known and projected requirements, invested prudently to fill critical gaps, and implemented a strategy that allows us to shape and employ LREC attributes sensibly, intelligently, and with optimal effect.

This is an enormous challenge given our 24/7 global presence mission in a world comprised of over 6,000 distinct languages, where 90 percent of world commerce moves over water, and 80 percent of the population lives within a few hundred miles of a coast or major waterway. It is made even more complex by the delicate balance we must strike between sustaining enduring missions, which require continued technological superiority, and accommodating our emerging roles and responsibilities, which necessitate development of "soft disciplines" such as language and cultural familiarity. As our new Maritime Strategy clearly states, "trust and cooperation cannot be surged," and we've taken concrete steps to ensure our LREC capabilities are sufficient to satisfy requirements.

Our effectiveness overseas is as dependent on our ability to comprehend and communicate as it is on firepower and technological supremacy. Therefore, LREC competencies are key to theater security cooperation, maritime domain awareness, humanitarian assistance and shaping-and-stability operations. They are likewise crucial to intelligence, information operations and criminal investigations. Most important, they are indispensable in building the international trust and cooperation.

We are confident that our approach to LREC transformation is right for the Navy's operational models and we have a good news story to tell. We have made significant progress in LREC transformation, but we still have work to do.

Navy's Vision and End-State for Language Skill, Regional Expertise and Cultural Awareness

As stated in the Navy LREC Strategy, the vision and end-state we seek are:

- Sufficient LREC capacity that meets Navy's known mission needs, with appropriate levels of expertise, and able to surge for emergent requirements:

- A total force that appreciates and respects cultural differences, and recognizes the risks and consequences of inappropriate behavior in foreign interactions, even if unintended,
 - A cadre of career language professionals (i.e., Foreign Area Officers (FAOs)) and cryptologic language analysts) whose primary functions require foreign language skill and regional expertise
 - Other language-skilled Sailors and civilians with sufficient proficiency to interact with foreign nationals at the working level
 - A reserve capacity of organic foreign language skill and cultural expertise that can be called upon for contingencies
- LREC capabilities aligned with operational requirements to support Joint and Navy missions utilizing the total force – active, reserve, civilian and contractor – and enabling Navy’s ability to shape and influence the maritime security environment
 - Agile, responsive and cost-effective LREC plans and policies that deliver results at best value while managing risk, given the time and expense necessary to achieve and sustain the capability
 - LREC development capability that maximizes existing education and training infrastructure, embraces new training opportunities, leverages the heritage and ethnic diversity of the Navy, and rewards linguistic proficiency

Put more succinctly, our preferred end-state is:

- Language fluency for some, but not all
- Regional expertise for some, but not all
- Cultural awareness for all

Navy’s emerging roles and missions have changed the very nature of our work and require more emphasis on LREC than ever before, especially within the General Purpose Force (GPF). However, not every Sailor and civilian can, or should be, fluent in a foreign language, nor can everyone be expert in a given region of the world. The cost, in terms of time and money, would be prohibitive. Therefore, our intent is to maintain a cadre of language and regional professionals whose duties require specialized expertise, but endeavor to imbue every Sailor and civilian with some degree of cultural awareness – focused on cross-cultural awareness, in general, but tailored to specific foreign cultures when necessary.

To achieve this vision and end-state, we’ve promulgated a strategy and accompanying implementation plan that clearly state our LREC priorities and objectives. Specific tasks are assigned to key staffs and commands within the Navy and progression is closely tracked by my staff.

As I stated previously, we believe we've developed the best possible approach to LREC transformation for Navy considering the scale and scope of change required. An historical framework provides useful context.

Where We Were: Drivers of Navy LREC Transformation

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Navy's LREC capability – the vast majority of which was contained in the intelligence and cryptologic communities – gradually began a transition toward a multi-polar international environment, adjusting to regional and transnational powers as required. Linguist capacities and language variety remained relatively static, although occasional development in less-commonly-taught languages occurred depending on the mission.

Anticipating the need for greater regional specialization in the officer corps, we established our inaugural Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program in 1997, a “dual-tracked” arrangement wherein an officer alternated between assignments in his or her chosen warfare specialty (aviation, surface, or submarine) and tours of duty as area specialists on key regional or headquarters staffs. Similarly, we sustained our cadre of Naval Attachés, and maintained our Personnel Exchange Program, or PEP, enjoying officer and enlisted exchanges with 18 traditional, mostly Cold War era, allies. The PEP and FAO programs remain central components of the Navy's LREC transformation and will be highlighted shortly.

Following the attack on USS Cole and the catastrophic events of 9/11, the Navy began shifting the focus of its LREC resources toward emerging terrorist threats. Key elements of the shift in focus included:

- In FY 2001, the Chief of Naval Operations directed the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) to develop instruction that would better prepare Navy forces for overseas missions by educating them about the regional environments in which they operate. Since then, NPS faculty routinely deploy with carrier and expeditionary strike groups, providing tailored lectures to staff and crew.
- In 2001, the Naval Special Warfare Command implemented Middle East and Islamic cultural awareness training and Arabic or Pashtun language instruction for Navy SEAL teams deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and, subsequently, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).
- In early 2002, the former Naval Security Group Command (since subsumed by the Naval Network Warfare Command) established the Advanced Language Response Team (ALRT) at its Ft. Meade, Maryland headquarters. Still highly active, ALRT's mission is to maintain a cadre of specialized professional linguists in Low Density/High Demand languages (e.g., Somali, Pashtu, Tausug) who can respond to emergent fleet needs.

- The Navy Personnel Command increased the cryptolinguist community's overall programmed authorizations by 23%; Arabic and Farsi billets increased sharply while Russian billets declined.
- In 2003, Navy assigned a career linguist (lieutenant commander) to the Defense Language Office under the auspices of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Plans and DoD's Senior Language Authority. The Navy officer-linguist became an integral member of the DLO staff and participated in the development of the *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*.
- Also in 2003, we established a small foreign language office on the staff of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education) (OPNAV N1) to manage the LREC requests stimulated by OEF and OIF. Initially manned by three senior enlisted cryptolinguists, the office was formally established in 2006 and has since expanded to 13 full-time employees led by a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES).

As these actions attest, the Navy quickly stepped up to post-9/11 drivers that stimulated transformation. Although largely underway already, Navy's LREC transformation was further driven by the *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*, with which we aligned our LREC Strategy. We likewise conformed to the LREC guidance of the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), including the *Irregular Warfare* and *Building Partner Capacity Roadmaps*.

Our principal driver, however, is the *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, commonly referred to as the Maritime Strategy, which calls specifically for development of "...sufficient cultural, historical and linguistic expertise of Sailors...to nurture effective interaction with diverse international partners."

Where We Are and Where We're Headed: Achieving the End-State

Taking the next logical step to institutionalize our transformation, in January 2008 we promulgated Navy's *Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Awareness Strategy* – a plan that aligns and galvanizes LREC across the Total Force. The LREC Strategy's framework:

- (1) Facilitates the Maritime Strategy's call for cultural and linguistic expertise
- (2) Unifies disparate LREC efforts within Navy
- (3) Aligns LREC capabilities to operational requirements
- (4) Focuses on providing the best value while managing risk in terms of training time and expense
- (5) Maximizes existing LREC training infrastructures and resources

- (6) Leverages Navy's rich heritage and ethnic diversity
- (7) Rewards linguistic proficiency
- (8) Delivers sufficient capacity for Navy's mission, including surge
- (9) Involves the total force – Active, Reserve, Civilian and Contractor

The LREC Strategy serves as our starting point and baseline for transformation, guiding the development of policies, processes and capabilities with which to achieve the aforementioned vision and end-state. The following abstract summarizes our progress to date and our continuing initiatives toward that end:

- **Concentrated LREC Leadership.** As mentioned earlier, the Navy Foreign Language Office was formally established within OPNAV in 2006 and charged with consolidating, aligning and organizing LREC policies and processes across the total force. Under the leadership of Navy's Senior Language Authority, the office is fully staffed and dedicated solely to LREC, FAO and PEP issues which were previously fragmented among various Navy commands and staffs.
- **Navy Strategic Language List.** Updated and promulgated annually, the Navy's list of strategic languages serves as a force shaping tool to guide recruitment, training and proficiency pay priorities. Like its DoD counterpart, the list projects our language priorities with a ten year horizon. It is based on inputs provided by Navy's principal foreign language stakeholders, i.e., the Navy Component Commanders, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Naval Network Warfare Command and the Office of Naval Intelligence. The list adds languages of concern to Navy that are not otherwise contained on the DoD list.
- **Foreign Language Skill Screening.** In parallel with a Navy-wide self-assessment of language capability completed in 2006, we implemented compulsory screening at all accession points in 2005. The results are captured in our personnel data bases, which allow us to identify and track the skills for operational purposes. When we re-baselined our data in March of this year, we counted over 140,000 individual assessments (not people – some people are fluent in multiple languages) of proficiency in more than 300 separate languages and dialects. As expected, approximately half the capability is in Spanish with large populations of French, German and Tagalog; however, exceptional capability – much of it native – is in obscure, less commonly taught languages from remote areas of the world. For example, a Seaman (E3) currently assigned to an aircraft carrier emigrated from West Africa and has documented proficiency in French, Mandingo-Bambara, and Arabic, as well as English. There are hundreds of Sailors and civilians in the Navy with multiple languages, offering a highly-valued capability woven into the fabric of the force. Although these individuals were not recruited exclusively for their foreign language skill, they

provide an organic source of language and cultural expertise that can be called upon in contingencies. Together with our Heritage Recruiting Plan which I'll discuss next, this systematic accounting and tracking of foreign language skill in the force is an essential part of our ability to react linguistically and culturally to contingencies around the world.

- **Heritage Recruiting.** We initiated a Navy Heritage Recruiting Plan in November 2005 with the purpose of accessing Sailors with skill in critical, less commonly taught languages. The plan is patterned loosely on the U.S. Army's O9L model. However, unlike the Army, the Navy has no standing requirement for full-time interpreters. Therefore, our plan aims to recruit Sailors with certifiable skill in a small subset of our Strategic Language List (e.g., Arabic, Pashto, Kurdish, Somali, Farsi, Tamil, etc.) and steer them to occupations or ratings where they'd most likely use their languages. Ratings such as Hospital Corpsman, Master at Arms, and those of the Navy Construction Battalion or Seabees are frequently deployed in expeditionary and humanitarian assistance roles and missions. In addition to all basic enlistment eligibility requirements, to be eligible under the Heritage Recruiting Plan, a potential recruit must meet a minimum score of Listening Level 2 and Reading Level 2 on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT), or a minimum score of Level 2 on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The Plan is heavily complemented by our compulsory foreign language screening process just described.
- **Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB).** We continue to enhance the FLPB to incentivize the acquisition, sustainment, and improvement of skill in strategic languages. Formerly restricted to the Navy's cryptolinguists and others serving in language-coded billets, FLPB eligibility was expanded to include Sailors and officers with qualified (i.e., tested) proficiency in critical languages, irrespective of billet or source of language acquisition. Moreover, as enacted in the FY07 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we modified our policies to pay incentives at lower proficiency levels for Sailors engaged in special or contingency operations. This again is an indispensable part of our LREC transformation approach in Navy. The FLPB was singularly effective in incentivizing heritage Sailors to identify their language skills. Eligibility is contingent upon successful completion of the DLPT and payments for active and reserve Sailors are as high as \$500 per month for top proficiency in a single critical language and up to \$1,000 per month for proficiency in more than one foreign language. FLPB policies for our civilian linguists continue to evolve; authority to pay FLPB has been delegated to the individual command level.
- **Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program** has been reconstituted as a restricted line community. FAOs will augment Navy Component Commands, forward-deployed Joint Task Forces, Expeditionary and Carrier Strike Groups, American embassies, and coalition partners. At full operational capability in 2015, Navy FAOs will number 400. To date, 168 have been identified with selection boards convening twice each year to select more.

- **Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)** is being realigned for consistency with the theater engagement strategies of the Navy Component Commanders. PEP billets with some of our traditional allies will be redistributed to support new relationships with as many as 26 emerging partners. The program will be made more competitive and career enhancing, particularly for commissioned officers. As theater security cooperation is indeed a core Navy mission, PEP is an essential ingredient of the Maritime Strategy.
- **Naval Attaché and Security Assistance Programs** distribution has been enhanced to provide additional flexibility in meeting the Navy's LREC objectives. Of 86 total Attaché billets (ANATT, NATT, DATT) and 77 SAO billets (i.e., ODC, SAO, JUSMAG), 46 billets (53%) and 50 billets (69%), respectively are being recoded from optional application within the Navy, to fenced billet application to directly link to LREC requirements.
- **Expanded Language Learning Opportunities for Officers.** We increased instruction at Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) for non-FAO officers. Beginning in FY-08, OPNAV programmed for 100 seats per year for officers in non-FAO designators. Officer Community Managers at the Navy Personnel Command now have greater flexibility to incorporate language training into the career paths of officers whose duties require linguistic skill.
- **Navy Center for Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (CLREC).** Through the Center for Information Dominance (CID) in Pensacola, we continue to expand language and culture training support in response to increasing Fleet demand. Conceived in February 2006, CID CLREC started as a clearinghouse for LREC training, but has gradually expanded to include development of individual country and regional studies tailored to fleet operations. All products are available to Navy forces around the globe via Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). CID CLREC has developed collaborative relationships with Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School and the U.S. Naval Academy, as well as DLIFLC, and the language and culture centers of our sister services. These relationships have yielded excellent results with respect to pre- and mid-deployment training for the Navy GPF, particularly those engaged in OEF, OIF and humanitarian assistance missions.
- **Navy Mission Essential Task (NMET) – Cultural Awareness.** To further reinforce our goal of cultural awareness for the Total Force, U.S. Fleet Forces Command established a Cultural Awareness Naval Task (NTA) in July 2007. The NTA is included in unit Navy Mission Essential Task Lists (NMETLs) and mandates cultural awareness training. This training is documented in the Navy Training Information Management System (NTIMS) and tracked throughout unit deployments. On 1 October 08 the Defense Readiness Reporting System – Navy (DRRS-N) will achieve IOC, and U.S. Fleet Forces will be able to assess

Cultural Awareness training effectiveness for the Total Force through Navy Task 4.8.5 on DRRS-N.

- **LREC Instruction Afloat.** As briefly mentioned above, the Naval Postgraduate School's Regional Security Education Program (RSEP) embarks NPS and U.S. Naval Academy faculty and regional experts in Navy strike groups to deliver underway lectures in regional threats, history, current affairs, and cultural awareness. These events are occasionally accompanied by DLIFLC Mobile Training Teams (MTT) which provide basic language familiarity instruction.
- **Navy Professional Military Education (NPME).** Naval War College (NWC) continues to develop integrated regional content in its resident and non-resident curricula at the Senior, Intermediate and Primary officer levels. The training has been tailored for enlisted PME as well and is available force-wide via NKO.
- **Undergraduate Education in LREC.** U.S. Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) programs have likewise increased their focus on LREC education. All NROTC midshipmen are required to take a course in culture studies, irrespective of major. Additionally, 20-25 NROTC scholarships per year have been dedicated to regional studies and/or foreign language majors. Naval Academy has dramatically expanded its portfolio, hiring 12 new language faculty members, establishing majors in Chinese and Arabic, and requiring non-technical majors to take four semesters of foreign language courses. Both USNA and NROTC have expanded their study abroad opportunities, including full semester exchanges with 11 countries, foreign immersions of up to three weeks, and foreign professional cruises with as many as 16 international navies.
- **Free Online Commercial Language Training.** Consistent with our end-state goal of enabling Sailors and civilians with sufficient language proficiency to interact with foreign nationals at the working level, we procured a license with a commercial language vendor in FY08 and posted the product on NKO. The product provides instruction in critical languages, all downloadable to personal computers, laptops and PDAs (including iPods). Furthermore, it's provided at no cost to all Sailors and civilians with NKO accounts.
- **Joint Language Training Center.** Established by Commander, Navy Reserve Force in 2003 to support Navy Reserve CTI training, JLTC provides three week courses in Arabic, Persian Farsi, Chinese, Korean, Russian and other low density languages. The training is available to the Total Force.

Finding the Balance: Requirements, Tradeoffs and Risks

The number and variety of cultures and languages with which Navy interfaced leading up to the turn of the 21st Century was far fewer than those we face today. We fully acknowledge the expanding need for awareness of foreign cultures, many of which have been long suppressed by foreign domination; some remain resistant to the globalized system. We also understand that LREC competencies can be indispensable to penetrating cultural barriers, building trust, and comprehending unfamiliar, ambiguous, and seemingly irrational behaviors.

For us, though, finding the right blend of capability and capacity relative to the demands of our global and technology-centric force is key. As I stated before, we're obliged not only to find the balance between our enduring and emerging missions, but also to build an LREC capability that accommodates both current and emerging requirements.

Gauging linguistic support and pre-/mid-deployment cultural awareness training for planned operations is generally feasible. However, as we expand relationships with new partners, acquiring relevant language skill and regional/cultural knowledge becomes difficult. Pinning down the right capacity – i.e., numbers of linguists, functions, modalities, and proficiencies – for each language is an evolutionary process. Moreover, building the investment portfolio to train and sustain the right quantity and quality of linguists and cultural experts is wholly dependent on clearly defined requirements. This is exacerbated by the Navy's inherent mobility, which frequently requires no-notice response to international emergencies and natural disasters. In those cases, prior LREC planning is typically nullified.

With respect to known requirements, we've examined our force structure and coded key billets and positions for specific foreign languages, in specific modalities, and in specific proficiencies. We count just over 6,000 requirements for foreign language, with 4,820 linked directly to billets. We've programmed for the training to meet our billet requirements. Beyond our Attaché and FAO communities, however, the need for expertise (vice basic awareness) in regions and cultures is not as well defined.

For the non-expert, we are investing in cultural awareness instruction and, where appropriate, language familiarity training. That training – coordinated by the Center for LREC in Pensacola and delivered at sea by the NPS Regional Security Education Program – is focused and tailored on the needs of the GPF.

With respect to the unknowns of emergencies and contingencies, the range of possibilities is seemingly limitless. From natural disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami or the recent cyclone devastation in Bangladesh, to emergent crises like the 2006 non-combatant evacuation operation in Lebanon, even the best contingency planning cannot predict the right number of linguists and experts needed for the myriad languages and cultures with which we may contend. Therefore, for contingency purposes, our approach is to augment as much as possible from our rich pool of

heritage Sailors. In some cases, we will contract expertise when our organic capabilities cannot meet our needs.

The tradeoffs for this combined approach are not insignificant, but manageable with deliberate planning and investment. With regard to our career linguists and regional experts, we must take care to invest in the sustainment and enhancement of their specialized skills and knowledge. Doing so not only requires resources, but time outside their normal operational rhythm to train. We are quite actively working the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process to ensure we're taking care of these professionals.

With respect to cultural awareness training for the GPF, the tradeoff is time. Making time – even a few hours – in already over-burdened pre-deployment training pipelines is increasingly difficult given the range of mandatory qualifications required for fleet operations. Nevertheless, Fleet Forces Command's recently established NMET focuses squarely on cultural awareness training and has had a positive effect. As a direct result, our Center for LREC in Pensacola and the NPS RSEP have exceeded their capacities to train. Again, we're actively working the PPBE process to properly resource those capabilities.

There is a distinct tradeoff in augmenting Sailors identified in our data base of linguists. When a Sailor with linguistic skill is taken away from his or her normal duties to perform a language function, a gap is invariably created at the supporting command. There's no simple or easy way to resolve this issue, but it happens occasionally and we've managed it.

Lastly, our Maritime Strategy places great emphasis on developing cooperative relationships before the crises occur, building foreign partnerships, and fostering trust – all preventatives to conflict. Considering the ability of LREC to facilitate and, in some cases, enable foreign access, any risk assumed with these tradeoffs is a diminished ability to execute regional engagement in the future.

Conclusion

I'm confident that our approach to LREC transformation is right for the Navy given our deployment models and range of global missions. We still have work to do, but we've made significant progress to date, and I believe the policies, programs and processes we have in place today will allow us to achieve our vision and end-state. On behalf of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Naval Personnel, thank you again for your interest and support of Navy LREC.